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Greenlake cabinet contractor charged with felony theft of sales tax and filing false tax returns

SEATTLE, Wash., January 23, 2004—A Seattle cabinet and construction company owner stole more than \$170,000 in state sales tax by failing to report most of the business he did for Seattle-area homeowners, according to charges filed today.

The Financial Crimes Unit of the Washington State Attorney General's Office today charged Paul B. Vetter, 62, with two counts of first degree theft for allegedly reporting only two percent of the cabinetry and construction work done by his company, along with two counts of filing false tax returns with the Department of Revenue.

The investigation and charges were made at the request of the Washington State Department of Revenue, which uncovered the alleged fraud during an audit of Vetter's company, Greenlake Cabinets and Construction Company, Inc.

Charging papers filed in King County Superior Court allege that Vetter received more than \$1,994,000 in gross income from his construction business during 1999 through 2001, and collected over \$174,300 in sales tax on that work. However, Vetter only reported \$41,051 in gross income to the Department of Revenue and remitted only \$3,568 in sales tax.

Vetter's failure to remit the entire amount of retail sales tax, which he knew to be trust funds, constituted theft from the State of Washington, according to the charging papers. The theft charges carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine. The false-return charges carry a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

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